

Historic District Review Committee

Staff Report

May 11, 2009

Action Items

**CAPP 2009-0004 Delle Fratte: Sideyard Fence in the Waterford Historic District.
MCPI 304-46-2969.**

Background

The subject property is a private residence located at 15626 Second Street in the Village of Waterford. Constructed in 1941, it served as the parsonage for the Waterford Methodist Church until 1966. The residence is two-story frame building clad with German siding. Later changes include a rear addition in 1974 and dormers in 1997.

The applicant proposes to build a fence along the rear sideyard to delineate clearly the property line. It will extend west 48' from the alley identified on the plat map and will mark the boundary line between the applicant's parcel to the south and the Jackson parcel to the north.

The proposed fence will match the existing three-board fence along the rear lot line/alley. It will be constructed of pressure treated 4"x4" posts at 8' intervals with 1"x6" horizontal boards. Facing the posts on the board side will be 1"x4" boards. The post tops will be angled and capped with small squares of wood. The fence will be primed and painted white to match the existing fence. The 48' long fence will end at a grouping of mature shrubs and landscaping along the property line.

The ruins of a barn foundation span the Delle Fratte-Jackson property line. The foundation stones and area inside the foundation are elevated above the surrounding yard approximately 2'. The applicant states that the soil in the elevated area is fill and has been disturbed over the years since it serves as a flower garden. In order to accommodate the change in elevation caused by the foundation ruins, the applicant informed staff that he would build two separate fences. One fence will span the elevated area inside the barn foundation ruins. The second fence will begin adjacent to the exterior edge of the foundation ruins and extend at ground level to its culmination.

Based on correspondence from the Zoning Division of the Loudoun County Department of Building and Development dated April 24, 2009, there are no zoning issues with the application.

Analysis

The Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines: Waterford Historic District (Waterford Guidelines) address fences and walls in the Site Elements section. First, the applicant

should ensure that the fence height conforms to the zoning regulations (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Fences and Walls, Guideline H.1., p. 45).

The Waterford Guidelines note that wooden board fences are often used at the rear property lines. This is true for the subject property as well as the rear and side yards of the neighboring Jackson property to the north. Since the proposed sideyard fence maintains the material, height, and detail of the existing board fence and relates to the historic building and the surroundings, the proposed fence meets Guidelines 4 and 5 for fences and walls (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Fences and Walls, Text, p.45; Guidelines H.4. and H.5., p. 45).

The Waterford Guidelines recommend avoiding siting new construction on or near archaeological sites. The portion of the property line that the applicant wishes to delineate spans the foundation ruins; therefore, moving the fence to avoid the ruins is not an option. The applicant does propose to minimize impact to the ruins by building the fence on top of and beside the foundation instead of removing them (Waterford Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Archaeological Sites, Guidelines E.1. and E.2., p.41). The foundation is wide enough to require holes for two fence posts on 8-foot centers to be dug inside the ruins. An additional posthole will be dug adjacent to the foundation. While three post holes will be excavated in and proximate to the archaeological site, only one post hole - the one next to the outside of the foundation - has the most potential to impact intact archaeological resources. The two holes inside the ruins will be dug in fill. The fence meets the Waterford Guidelines for archaeological sites since the proposal minimizes impacts to the site by not leveling the ruins and by digging a minimal number of postholes in and adjacent to the site.

Findings

1. Board fences are commonly found at rear property lines in the Waterford Historic District, such as the subject property and the neighboring property to the north.
2. The proposed fence is similar in materials, height, and detail to the existing fence on the property, meeting the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines: Waterford Historic District.
3. The applicant cannot move the location of the fence because its purpose is to delineate a property line that bisects the barn foundation ruins. By building the fence on top of the ruins rather than removing them, the applicant is minimizing impacts to the archaeological site. Additionally, since the soil inside the ruins is fill and has been disturbed by gardening, postholes inside the foundation will likely not impact intact archaeological features.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. Keep ground disturbance inside and adjacent to the foundation ruins to a minimum during fence construction.

2. Keep artifacts and precisely record their location if found during posthole excavation.
3. Notify the Department of Planning if unique or a large amount of artifacts or soil features are found while digging postholes.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0004 for the proposed board fence at 15626 Second Street in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the following findings...(see findings above).*
2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0004 for the proposed board fence at 15626 Second Street in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Waterford Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the following findings (see findings above)....and the following conditions (see conditions above).*
3. *I move alternate motion...*

